Taizé
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hamburg

Letter from Taizé

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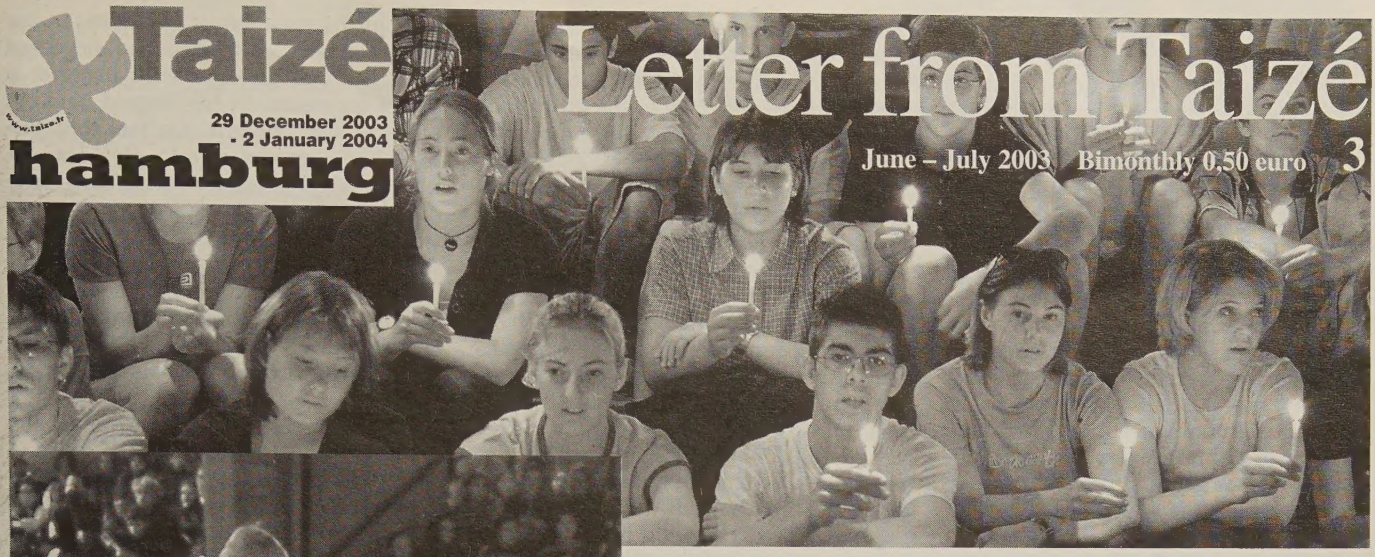

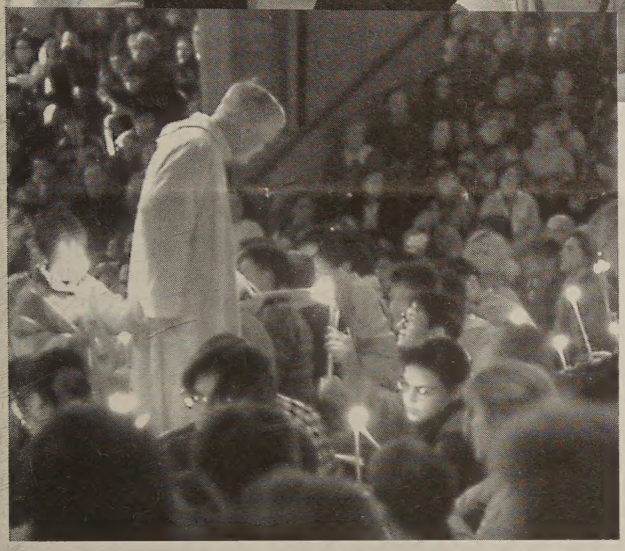

Jesus Christ, from the morning of your Resurrection, you flood our souls with unexpected light. It is then that we discover that, even if there may be corners of darkness in each of us, there is above all in each of us the mystery of your presence.

Prayer of Brother Roger for Easter Morning

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EASTER IN TAIZÉ

A new life offered for all

Many young people have followed each other in succession at Taizé during the weeks of the Easter Season: more than five thousand, from numerous countries of Europe, were there to rejoice in the proclamation of the Resurrection on the Sunday morning, and to join in praise on the occasion of the life-commitment of a new Brother.

God invites us, within our own hearts, to a new life. Speaking to the new Brother during the course of the Sunday morning celebration, Brother Roger spoke these few words: "Refusing henceforward to look back, and joyful with infinite gratitude, never fear to rise to meet the dawn, praising, blessing and singing Christ your Lord."

To celebrate the Resurrection is to recognise that God is able to create anew, at the very heart of situations of apparent failure and discouragement. Since April, new themes for reflection have been suggested in the Meetings at Taizé. One of the themes—"What is the new life that Jesus proposes?"—attempts to re-read Jesus' life in view of the Resurrection-event. One of the other themes is based on the 2003 Letter, "A God who Simply Loves": What are the sources of Hope? How can we live by them and be bearers of peace wherever we are? A third group is suggesting an in-depth reading of the Letter to the Philippians: "How did the first Christians live? Who was Christ for the Apostle Paul?"

For any who wish, there is always the possibility of spending a week in silence and in this way seeking to "enter a deeper communion with God in prayer."

Life is certainly always new when it is filled with infinite attention to the needs of others. How can we move onwards from personal reflection to com-

mitment when we return home? "Workshops" at the end of the afternoon try to find ways of continuing our reflection on subjects bearing on present needs, culture or ways of living in society. "How to react when faced with the violence which certain young people encounter?" "What can I do to favour economic solidarity?" "How can we get involved in City life?"

Many have seen in this invitation to new life a strong connection with the hope of peace in the midst of international tensions. All through these weeks the prayer for peace has been intense. In the late-afternoon meetings there was put forward almost every day some reflection on the latest situation, in order to escape from the spiral of violence in international relations.

In the course of the Vigil on the night of Holy Saturday, Brother Roger invited to speak Jean-Claude Mallet, a friend of the Community who has important responsibilities in France for the pursuit of peace. He shared his hope, which is founded on the Resurrection:

"This evening, as we experience the Night of the Resurrection after a period which has been troubled by war, we feel like saying and experiencing how much Resurrection and Peace are intimately linked. We would wish to plunge deep into the well of the Resurrection, to seek for the strength to bring peace into all situations. Christ himself evokes this gift of peace, just before his Passion and in the first words he speaks after he has risen.

"Perhaps today many people, in their desire for peace, feel wounded. Perhaps they are touched by doubt and discouragement. To such people, as to all, God and the Gospel come to say how in the very depths of darkness light can spring up anew. God and the Gospel come to say that Christ himself went to the very depths of the darkness in order to cause light to spring up there. Hope is an eternal message from God, from all eternity: a message that may be heard in the most ancient Hymn of Creation or in the newest Resurrection joy.

"But at the same time, hope is a tangible, concrete, present reality. We can see this hope in the rejection of the logic of war, in the rejection of divisions, in the desire of peoples to pass beyond these divisions and to experience together a desire for peace. In this regard, and especially here tonight, we feel that Europe has a special role to play since it has no longer been, for such a long time now, a field of battle.

"Far from leading to indifference, this situation commits Europe to renewed responsibilities. Why so? Because it is a meeting-place, a place of convergence, of histories of civilizations and of religions, in particular of Christianity and Islam.

"But how can we commit ourselves? Perhaps by first being audacious enough to be builders of hope, constructors of peace, even at a moment when this construction is more than ever necessary, even in the most apparently contradictory circumstances. There are numerous opportunities for this construction of peace all over the world, beginning with the Middle East. Perhaps by keeping in mind that message of universality which is at the heart of the Gospel: all, without exception, are

PREPARATIONS HAVE BEGUN FOR THE NEXT EUROPEAN MEETING IN HAMBURG

"Some events must be accepted as gifts."

From the first announcement of the international meeting to be held in Hamburg at the end of the year, the young people of Germany responded joyfully. One young person from Hamburg was surprised to even see the city's news release about the meeting on screens in the carriages of the Metro: "I am delighted. It is really good Easter news. I am ready to start helping prepare for the meeting right away." Some young people from Saxony who were at Taizé explained: "The first image of Hamburg is that of the largest port in Germany, with all that that entails in terms of openness to the world. The city has both economic and cultural riches. We love this city with its ancient traditions and beautiful churches, as well as its contrasts that make its people more open-minded than people elsewhere."

The announcement of the Hamburg meeting was, for the first time, made jointly by the churches and the city council. A joint statement, issued by the Lutheran and Catholic bishops, together with the mayor of Hamburg, included these words: "We rejoice greatly that our city is to host this large meeting. Young people will go beyond their differences, meeting here to celebrate the faith which unites us all. They are full of pressing questions about a more human future and they try hard to follow the paths of justice and peace in their everyday lives. The European meeting is a sign of hope and encouragement in a broken world. We are happy, today, to invite all the inhabitants of Hamburg to extend a warm welcome to the youth of Europe and to share a real meeting with them."

From the first contacts made, it has been clear that the welcome will be a warm one. The Lutheran bishop of Hamburg said: "If the youth of the world are to meet in our town under the sign of Jesus Christ, this will give great momentum to understanding between all the groups of young people. Hamburg will offer the meeting rich hospitality and a peaceful site. Some events must be accepted as gifts. We shall prepare for this event with great enthusiasm."

During the Easter weeks, over four thousand young Germans stayed at Taizé. Even those coming from other regions of Germany felt the responsibility for doing all they could to ensure the most hospitable welcome possible. With the residents of the Hamburg region, they want to show fraternal hospitality: "We sometimes consider ourselves to be a cold and distant people and it is true that we are less communicative than some others, but we are capable of showing a real interest in the young people of other European countries. Hamburg is at a crossroads: between East and West, between Northern and Central Europe. It has always maintained contacts with the countries of Scandinavia and the Baltic. We shall be able to support the parishes and take an active part in the meeting, helping with translation, singing and the animation of reflections."

The young people from the Hamburg region who took part in the Easter meetings at Taizé thought straightaway of their friends who do not know Taizé and are not regular church attenders. One of them said: "Even if they have no contact with the parish, I shall tell them about the meeting. The presence, in Hamburg, of thousands of young people from the whole of Europe will give them the chance to discover what I find to be important. They will be able to experience a communion between many people, marked by charity and trust."

Andreas recalled: "One of the riches of our town is the many social projects. Thanks to its port, Hamburg was one of the first industrial towns and the Christians there soon developed a solidarity with the poorest people. This same concern still exists, in various forms, and an

called by this universal message. And then, by working tirelessly at searching in our heart for the source of this hope, for it is there in our heart that Christ is ever waiting for us. As one of the Fathers of the Church said: 'Present within us, he is always waiting for us.' So we can feel on this night, perhaps more than ever, that interior peace and universal peace are joined in one, bound together in the light of the Resurrection."

important element of the meeting will be the opportunity to share our experiences." The Catholic Archbishop is also aware of these issues: "Young people from all over Europe will be meeting here to celebrate the faith that unites them. They will be asking urgent questions about the future of humanity. My hope is that the European meeting will be a sign of hope and encouragement." Many signs of hope are lived out, in the heart of Hamburg, by people actively involved in social work. During the morning meetings in the parishes, the young people from all over Europe will have the chance to discover these initiatives.

The first information meetings for everyone wishing to help prepare for this meeting will take place during May, in and around Hamburg. There is great joy wherever the preparations have begun for this new stage in the pilgrimage of trust on earth. Klaus, one of the region's youth workers, wrote recently: "We feel we are already on the way, and at the end of the year tens of thousands will join us on this journey. They are not coming to see the sights or the city, but to join us in seeking new sources of hope. We are counting on the young people from the rest of Germany who will join us. It is also important for us to know that we are going to live this adventure together with people of all ages and from all the Christian communities of our region – and live it with enthusiasm, as our bishop invites us."

West North East South

China

Meetings and Prayers in Hong Kong and Macau

It was during the week before the start of the war in Iraq that a series of meetings and prayers was held in Hong Kong and Macau. All of them were centred on peace: "How can we become peacemakers?" "How can hope be renewed?" This second question was particularly appropriate for young people in Hong Kong who are faced with a rapidly deteriorating economic situation. Many people are losing their jobs and students no longer know whether they will find a job that corresponds to the studies they have done. After many years of high economic growth, it is not easy to adapt to the present changes.

The prayers were held in churches in the three main sectors of Hong Kong: Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. Kowloon Union Church is a brick structure set in the midst of high-rise buildings. In the street, on this Friday evening, the crowd is tightly packed, pulsating with life. Two little girls read the Beatitudes, alternating in Cantonese and English. Beforehand, they had lit the candles; their presence and their children's voices brought some fresh air into the heart of this great city filled with problems.

Next day, at Saint Thomas the Apostle's, Tsing Yi, it is young people who have prepared everything. For the first time, there were some young French people taking part. In Hong Kong for their studies; they were delighted to get this opportunity to meet with and pray with young Chinese.

In each place, Kowloon Union Church, Tsing Yi, or Saint Peter's Anglican Church at North Point, the gatherings provided an opportunity for people from different churches to pray together. At a time when people are very divided, the call for unity is urgent. It was clear that the young people realized this urgency at once. At St. Benedict's over 200 students from two high-schools came together. After reading the letter "A God Who Simply Loves," each person wrote down a prayer. Reading their reflections, you could sense the maturity of the students. In Macau, the invitation came from the "Centro de Pastoral Juvenil". The prayer had been prepared in the Chapel of Santa Rosa de Lima College. So many young people arrived at the chapel that it was a tight squeeze around the altar and the adults had to do with places at the very back.

Just before the start of this programme of meetings and prayers in Hong Kong came the news that a new and highly contagious form of pneumonia (SARS) was spreading very quickly. This epidemic has deeply affected the entire region and everyone is involved in facing the threat, with the medical profession in the front line. All public activities are affected, especially the life of the churches, for it is essential to avoid all risk of contagion. Some of those who prepared the prayers are now directly involved in this effort.

Haiti

A Meal for the Poor

Where did the inspiration come from? Perhaps from the First Letter of John, "Our love must be not just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine." Some years ago, Emmanuella, Marie-Claude, Djames and several others were tired of talk, so they decided to put money aside to prepare a meal once a week for the poor in their neighborhood in Port au Prince. A young Haitian man working in Florida contributes what is lacking in order to meet this goal. At noon every Sunday, very poor people, some elderly, come together in one of the parish rooms. They are waiting for this meal served by the young people. It is not merely a distribution of food. You can feel that a relationship of respect has grown up between the poor and those who are serving them. At the end of the meal there are big smiles all round. The old people's faces are partic- > 7

HOPE

What is the source of Christian hope?

At a time when people often have trouble finding reasons to hope, those who place their trust in the God of the Bible need more than ever to "give to anyone who asks an account of the hope that is in [them]" (1 Peter 3:15). They have to understand what is specific about the hope that comes from faith, in order to root their lives in it.

Even if by definition hope refers to the future, for the Bible it is rooted in the present, in God's today. In the Letter 2003, Brother Roger reminds us that "[The source of hope] is in God, a God who simply loves us and can do nothing else, a God who never stops seeking us."

In the Hebrew Bible, that mysterious Source of life we call God makes himself known by calling human beings to enter into a relationship with him: he enters into a **covenant** with them. The Bible defines the characteristics of the covenant God using two Hebrew words: *hesed and emeth* (e.g. Exodus 34:6; Psalm 25:10; 40:10-11; 85:10). In general, these words are translated by "steadfast love" and "faithfulness." They tell us, first of all, that God is overflowing goodness and kindness who wants to take care of his people and, second, that God will never abandon those he has called to enter into fellowship with him.

That is the source of biblical hope. If God is good and never changes his attitude nor forsakes us, then whatever difficulties may arise—if the world we see is far from justice, peace, solidarity and compassion—for believers this is not the definitive situation. From their faith in God, believers draw the expectation of a world according to God's will or, to put it another way, according to God's love.

In the Bible, this hope is often expressed by the notion of **promise**. When God enters into contact with human beings, generally this is accompanied by the promise of greater life. We already see this in the story of Abraham: "I will bless you," says God to Abraham, "and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3).

A promise is a dynamic reality that opens new possibilities for human life. It looks toward the future, but it is rooted in a relationship with the God who speaks to me here and now, who calls me to make specific choices in my life. The seeds of the future are found in a present relationship with God.

This rootedness in the present is made even stronger with the coming of Christ Jesus. In him, says Saint Paul, all God's promises are already a reality (2 Corinthians 1:20). This does not only refer, of course, to someone who lived in Palestine 2000 years ago. For Christians, Jesus is the Risen Christ who is with us today. "I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Another text of Saint Paul's is even clearer. "Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). Far from being a simple wish for the future with no guarantee that it will come about, Christian hope is the presence of divine love in person, the Holy Spirit, a current of life that carries us to the ocean of the fullness of communion.

How can we root our lives in Christian hope?

Biblical and Christian hope does not mean living in the clouds, dreaming of a better life. It is not merely a projection of what we would like to be or do. It leads us to discover seeds of a new world already present today, because of the identity of our God, because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This hope is, in addition, a source of energy to live differently, not according to the values of a society based on the thirst for possession and competition.

In the Bible, the divine promise does not ask us to sit down and wait passively for it to come about, as if by magic. Before speaking to Abraham about the fullness of life offered to him, God says, "Leave your country and your home for the land I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). To enter into God's promise, Abraham is called to make of his life a pilgrimage, to undergo a new beginning.

Similarly, the good news of the resurrection is not a way of taking our minds off the tasks of life here and now, but a call to set out on the road. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? ... Go into the entire world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation... You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:11; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8).

Impelled by the Spirit of Christ, believers live in deep solidarity with humanity cut off from its roots in God. Writing to the Christians of Rome, Saint Paul speaks of the longing of creation and compares this suffering to the pangs of childbirth. Then he continues, "We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly" (Romans 8:18-23). Our faith is not a privilege that take us out of the world; we "groan" with the world, sharing its pain, but we live this situation in hope, knowing that, in Christ, "the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining" (1 John 2:8).

Hoping, then, means first of all discovering in the depths of the present a Life that leads forward and that nothing is able to stop. It also means welcoming this Life by a yes spoken by our whole being. As we embark on this Life, we are lead to create signs of a different future here and now, in the midst of the difficulties of the world, seeds of renewal that will bear fruit when the time comes.

For the first Christians, the clearest sign of this new world to come was the existence of communities made up of people of different backgrounds and languages. Because of Christ, these tiny communities sprang up everywhere in the Mediterranean world. Going beyond the divisions of all sorts that kept people apart from one another, these men and women lived as brothers and sisters, as God's family, praying together and sharing their possessions according to the needs of each person (cf. Acts 2:42-47). They strived to have "one and the same love, [be] united in spirit and focused on the same thing" (Philippians 2:2). In that way they shone out like points of light in the world (cf. Philippians 2:15). From the very beginning, Christian hope kindled a fire on the earth.

JULY

Mk 1:29-39

1 Tue Very early, long before dawn, Jesus got up and went to a deserted place and there he prayed. When the disciples found him, he said to them, "Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also."

Is 29:15-21

2 Wed When the Lord comes, the deaf will hear the words of the book and, delivered from shadows and darkness, the eyes of the blind will see. The poor and resourceless will discover ever more joy in God.

Jn 20:24-29

3 Thu St THOMAS Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus replied, "You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

2 Co 4:8-12

4 Fri Paul writes: We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; we see no way out, but we never despair. We always carry in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be revealed there too.

Ep 1:3-14

5 Sat God chose us in Christ, before the world was made, to be holy and faultless before him in love.

2 Co 12:1-10

6 SUN Paul writes: God said to me: My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Rv 22:16-21

7 Mon Jesus is the bright morning star. Let all who are thirsty come; let whoever wishes take the water of life as a gift.

Ws 1:1-15

8 Tue The Spirit of the Lord fills the world: it holds all things together and knows every word said.

Lk 6:20-23

9 Wed Looking at his disciples, Jesus said: Happy are you who are poor, the kingdom of God is yours.

2 Co 1:18-22

10 Thu Paul writes: Christ Jesus was never Yes-and-No; his nature is all Yes.

Jm 5:7-11

11 Fri James writes: For an example of patience in the face of suffering look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord: those who persevered are blessed.

Ps 16

12 Sat Lord, you teach me the way of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy.

Mk 6:7-13

13 SUN Calling the Twelve to him, Jesus sent them out two by two. And they went preaching the need to change one's heart and they drove out many evil spirits.

Dt 26:1-11

14 Mon We called on the Lord, the God of our fathers, and he heard our cry. God saw our misery, our toil and oppression and brought us out of the land of slavery.

Tt 1:1-4

15 Tue Paul writes to Titus: God gives his faithful the hope of eternal life which he promised before the beginning of time.

Is 61:1-4

16 Wed The Lord sent me to comfort all who mourn, to clothe them in festive garments instead of despondency.

Mt 9:1-8

17 Thu Jesus said to the scribes, "So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." Then he said to the paralytic, "Stand up, take your bed and go home." And the man got up and went home.

Ac 26:1-23

18 Fri The Risen Christ said to Paul: I am sending you out so that people may turn from darkness to light and receive, through faith in me, forgiveness of their sins.

1 Co 2:1-9

19 Sat Paul writes: I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you God's mystery, for I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Mk 6:30-34

20 SUN When Jesus saw the large crowd, he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them at length.

Ezk 20:40-44

21 Mon God says to his people: I shall welcome you, when I gather you from all the nations where you have been scattered. Through you, I shall display my holiness for all nations to see.

1 Th 5:12-28

22 Tue May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through, and may your spirit, soul and body be kept blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Jr 32:37-41

23 Wed The Lord says: I shall make an everlasting covenant with my people, never to cease in my efforts for their good.

Mt 11:28-30

24 Thu Jesus said: Come to me, you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.

Mt 20:20-28

25 Fri St JAMES Jesus said to his disciples: You know that in the world the powerful make their power felt. Among you this is not to happen. No, anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant.

Ps 23

26 Sat The Lord is my shepherd, nothing do I lack. You prepare a table for me under the eyes of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Jn 6:1-15

27 SUN After the people saw Jesus feed the crowd, they began to say: "Surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus, realizing that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, withdrew to the hills again, alone.

Zc 2:14-17

28 Mon On that day many nations will turn to God and will become his people.

Is 12:1-6

29 Tue Sing of the Lord, for his works are great: make them known throughout the world. Cry out for joy, for God is among you.

Heb 2:9-18

30 Wed Jesus, who submitted to death, is now crowned with glory. And the gift of his life, by God's grace, benefits us all.

Jn 9:1-40

31 Thu Jesus said to the blind man whom he had healed: "Do you believe in the Son of man?" "Sir," the man replied, "tell me who he is, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said: "You have seen him; he is speaking to you."

Holy Spirit, Comforter, come and breathe upon the worries that can keep us far from you. And enable us to discover the wellsprings of trust placed in the depths of our being.

These short readings are those read, day by day, at community prayer in Taizé. The Bible reference given indicates a slightly longer passage.

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

AUGUST

God of compassion, through the Gospel we glimpse that you love us even in our moments of intimate solitude. Happy are they who abandon themselves to you in heartfelt trust.

1 **Fri** 1 P 5:5-7 Clothe yourselves in humility in your relationships with others, for God gives his grace to the humble.

2 **Sat** Mt 28:16-20 Jesus, risen from the dead, said to his disciples: I am with you always, to the end of time.

3 **SUN** Jn 6:27-29 The people asked Jesus, "What must we do to do God's work?" Jesus replied, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

4 **Mon** Mt 12:15-21 In Jesus the words of the prophet Isaiah were fulfilled: "Look! My servant whom I have chosen. I will place my Spirit upon him. In him the nations will put their hope."

5 **Tue** Mt 18:12-14 Jesus said: If a shepherd finds one sheep that was lost, it gives him more joy than ninety-nine others that did not stray at all. In the same way, your Father in heaven does not want even one to be lost.

6 **Wed** 2 P 1:19-21 TRANSFIGURATION You do well to pay attention to the word of the prophets, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

7 **Thu** Dt 30:1-14 Moses said to the people: If you return to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, then he will have compassion on you.

8 **Fri** 1 S 2:1-4 Hannah prayed in these words: My heart rejoices in the Lord and in his deliverance. There is no Holy One like the Lord, no Rock like our God.

9 **Sat** Mt 6:1-6 Jesus said: When you give, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your generosity is secret. And your Father, who sees all that is done in secret, will reward you.

10 **SUN** Jn 6:47-51 Jesus said: I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

11 **Mon** Is 45:20-25 There is no other God but me, says the Lord. Turn to me and you will be saved, all you ends of the earth.

12 **Tue** Ps 5 Thanks to your faithful love I may enter your house, where I bow down in adoration. Lead me, O Lord, in your justice.

13 **Wed** Is 43:9-12 You yourselves are my witnesses, declares the Lord, you are those whom I have chosen.

14 **Thu** Mt 13:1-9 Jesus said: A sower went out to sow. Some seeds fell on good soil and produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. The seed is the Word of God.

15 **Fri** Lk 1:39-56 THE VIRGIN MARY Mary said: The Lord's merciful love stretches from age to age upon those who revere him.

16 **Sat** Rm 5:1-11 Our hope will not let us down, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

17 **SUN** Jn 6:51-58 Jesus said: Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.

18 **Mon** Jr 2:1-13 The Lord says to his people: I remember the faithful love of your youth, when you followed me through the desert.

19 **Tue** Mt 12:46-50 Jesus said: Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

20 **Wed** 1 Th 3:6-13 Paul writes: Your faith has been a great encouragement to us in the middle of our own distress and hardship.

21 **Thu** Jr 15:15-21 Jeremiah said: When your words came, Lord, I devoured them: your word was my delight and the joy of my heart.

22 **Fri** Mi 7:18-20 What God can compare with you, Lord, for pardoning sin and overlooking transgression? You will again have compassion on us, treading our sins underfoot.

23 **Sat** Jn 7:25-30 Jesus said: I am not here on my own, but the one who sent me is true. I know him because I am from him and he sent me.

24 **SUN** Jn 6:57-63 Jesus said: The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

25 **Mon** Mk 11:22-25 Jesus said: When you pray, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, and your Father in heaven will forgive your sins.

26 **Tue** Gn 50:15-21 Joseph forgave his brothers saying: Do not be afraid; is it for me to put myself in God's place? The harm you planned to do me has, by God's design, been turned to good.

27 **Wed** Pr 3:21-31 God will be your confidence, and will keep your feet from being snared.

28 **Thu** Lk 12:32-34 Jesus said: Give to those in need. Provide for yourselves a treasure that will not fail. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

29 **Fri** Lk 9:1-6 Jesus sent his disciples out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

30 **Sat** Heb 13:17-25 May the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, equip you with everything good for doing his will.

31 **SUN** Jm 1:22-25 James writes: Do not only listen to the Word, put it into practice.

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MEDITATING ON THE WORD

JOHANNINE HOURS

September: John 21:1-14

A familiar scene. The Sea of Tiberias, a group of fishermen. They work the whole night long but catch nothing. It as if we are at the beginning of the gospel (cf. Luke 5:1-11). And yet there is a difference. They have already known Christ and lived with him. They have listened to his teaching, seen his miracles. They have placed all their hope in him and now apparently everything is over.

Confronted by this failure, the disciples do not know what to do. So they try to go back to what they know best, fishing. Perhaps that makes them feel secure in the face of the emptiness they feel. In this emptiness, the Risen Christ comes to his disciples to help them go further. He makes use of their failure to help them understand that they are called to something greater. The promise of the beginning will be fulfilled. In spite of their limitations, these fishermen will become fishers of people (Luke 5:10).

How does he do this? The Risen Christ does not humiliate the disciples. He comes to them with words full of tenderness and like a poor man. "My children, don't you have any fish?" Then come words that invite them to take another risk. "Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find something" (v. 6). The disciples could respond to this invitation, "Who is this man who is trying to tell us how to fish?" But they trust him. Just as at the beginning of the gospel (Luke 5:5), their trust will enable them to discover that it is the Lord!

- How do I react in the face of failure?
- When have I had the experience that a failure became a way for God to invite me to go further?
- In my daily life, when have I been able to say: It is the Lord, the Risen Christ? What helps me to discover this presence again and again?

October: 2 Timothy 1:3-12

"Fan into flame the gift of God that is in you," wrote Saint Paul to his beloved co-worker, Timothy. In each of us God has placed a gift. But, like coals burning under the ashes, sometimes God's gift remains hidden. The challenge is to reveal it.

By praying, we can begin to discern the gift God has placed in us. In the silence of our heart, we discover that all God asks us is to welcome the gift of his love.

But it is also true that others can awaken the gift of God in us. When we look at ourselves, it can happen that we only see what we lack. That leads to discouragement. When someone looks at us with trust, it can transform us. That is how Timothy discovered his vocation. He was young (1 Tim 4:12) and rather timid (2 Tim 1:8) when he began to work with Paul. In spite of that, because of Paul's trust in him, Timothy was able to go further than he could imagine. He went so far that he became a real support for Paul when he was in prison (2 Tim 1:4-5).

God himself is the one who awakens God's gift in us. God believes in our humanity. He trusts us for what we are. God himself has given us "a spirit of strength, love and self-control" (2 Tim 1:7).

But each gift involves a call. Now Timothy is called to give his life for the Gospel. He will be able to do it if, together with those who went before him (cf. 2 Tim 1:5), he places his trust in God's power (2 Tim 1:8). God's power is the resurrection, which causes life to shine out in suffering and which gives us the inner strength to dare to give our life for others.

- How can I awaken God's gift in me?
- Who has been a support for me in the course of my journey?
- How do I understand these words: "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of strength, love and self-control"?

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

ularly moving. Everybody knows they can count on this weekly rendezvous. When was their last meal? Nobody knows. The plates are gathered up and the young people try to find out the medical needs of those who have come. Several have eye problems. One has been hit by a bullet and is walking with crutches; the wound is infected and needs care. A lady in her fifties has come in the hope that the abscess she has on a tooth, which is giving her great pain, will be taken care of. Appointments are fixed to take those in need to the doctor or the dentist.

Around three o'clock the young people are by themselves. That day there are around thirty of them. Their objective is to support one another, overcoming the isolation that leads to discouragement, to deepen their faith, and to learn to live together. Several new people have come just to see. How do you lead a meeting like this? They are searching. They have no model and they are feeling their way. But in spite of everything, they are happy to be together and to welcome each other.

Sometimes they visit the poor who live in the hills, where there are no cars or roads. Last week, they went off at 5 in the morning and it took them eight hours, uphill all the way, to reach their destination. There was just enough time to visit several people in need, to see what could be done, and then walk eight hours back home again.

You think of Saint Paul, "Now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Spain

Sharing a Common Search

At the end of February to the middle of March, three Taizé brothers covered many kilometres, visiting young people in different parts of Spain.

For Vocations Day, one of the priests from the seminary in Seville had invited us to lead a meeting for young adults from throughout the diocese. For some years now, there has been an increase in the number of young people seriously considering the question of a vocation within the church. So, sometime around the Feast of Saint Joseph, the seminary has developed the habit of organising an open meeting for young people from the diocese, to think and pray about the vocation of all baptized people in the Church. Following a Bible introduction, the young people met in small groups around a theme taken from Brother Roger's Letter for 2003: "In a simple prayer, many people understand one day that God is calling them. What is God's call?" Some people expressed how important their experience in the meetings in Taizé last summer was for them. Their discoveries have helped them become more deeply committed within their local communities: caring for children from families in difficulty, collecting medicines and food to be sent to needy countries, helping to make sure that immigrants who come to the parish looking for help are welcomed. The meeting was brought to a close with a magnificent prayer, with songs from Taizé. The singing had been prepared over several weeks by young people from the city and the surrounding region, together with some of the seminarians. At the very end, after a prayer around the Cross, each one was invited to write a prayer on a Cross made of paper, set up in the little square in font of the church, and asking for peace for the world.

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www.taize.fr

A journey in Myanmar

A brother reflects on his recent journey in Myanmar. "Why do I always feel so encouraged when I come back from Burma? Among the people I meet at each stage of this journey, there is such an authenticity, be it among the young, the priests, or the religious, everybody... Those in charge of youth work try to provide a complete form of education: in social matters, health, education in values, and to render the Gospel message credible through this."

http://www.taize.fr/en/enplbur.htm

Saturday evening prayer from Taizé

Domradio, the Catholic radio in Cologne, Germany, will be broadcasting the Saturday evening prayer from Taizé, each Saturday until 7 June. The prayer is recorded at 20.30 and broadcast at 22.00 Central European Time (20.00 GMT). The broadcast can be followed live on the internet at:

http://213.168.99.188/Live/live-start.htm

also on local radio and satellite channels, details of which can be found at:

http://www.domradio.de

Travel to Taizé

For those planning to travel to Taizé this year, it is a good idea to check out our Travel to Taizé section: detailed road maps, special bus services from many countries, latest SNCF train timetables, nearest airports, how to get to Taizé from Charles de Gaulle airport for non-French speakers.

http://www.taize.fr/images/france2.jpg

A weekend of song in Gambia

Youth in the West African country of Gambia love to sing. With the prayers based on Taizé songs in Wolof and in English, and the bible introductions interwoven with short song practices, the meeting, at the beginning of April, at the Shalom Centre in Banjul, turned out to be a weekend of song.

http://www.taize.fr/en/enplgafr.htm

A sign of hope

An Australian visitor to Bangladesh describes how the Taizé brothers are trying to respond to the challenges of living a Christian presence within a predominantly Islamic culture.

http://www.taize.fr/en/enplgsa.htm

Young people from various parishes in Madrid are used to coming to Taizé all year round, especially during Holy Week and in the summer. During this visit, it was the first time a meeting took place in Nuestra Senora de la Pena Parish, in a working class area in the south of the city. In the midst of a difficult neighburhood, the parish has become a meeting pace for people from across the world: Peruvians, Ecuadorians, Italians, Romanians, Finnish, North Americans... many of them have become part of the parish community, thanks to the regular prayer that is open to everybody in the neighburhood. Valentine, one of the parish priests, says, "Seven years ago we were faced with a radical choice. Either we wanted to pray behind closed doors, or else we wanted the doors to remain wide open. Finally we came to the decision to leave the doors open during the prayer. In this way, people passing in front of the church can come if they wish. And they keep on coming." This welcoming spirit has greatly helped to build up the parish community. It is not rare for the Eucharist to be followed by a simple meal where each person shares with the others what he or she has brought. This has helped people get to know each other, to become interested in the others, and of course has created links of solidarity.

Mexico

Meeting in Aguascalientes

During the month of May 2003, a new stage in the "pilgrimage of trust on earth" was held with the young people of Mexico. It is not the first time that the pilgrimage of trust goes to Mexico. Already in the 1970s, several meetings were held in that country. There was a large meeting in the city of Guadalajara, in the state of Jalisco, in 1974. Young people came from several Latin American countries as well as from the United States and Canada. Three years ago in May, over a thousand young Mexicans from sixteen states and all the regions of the country came together in the city of Querétaro. This year, from Thursday 15 to Sunday 18 May, in collaboration with the Mexican Bishops' Commission for Youth Ministry (CEMPAJ), Taizé brothers were invited to lead a meeting in the city of Aguascalientes.

Aguascalientes is a city of a million inhabitants, in the very center of Mexico. Just as during the European meetings, the participants were welcomed into families and parishes of the city. Each morning they came into the city to the Villa Charra, a large exhibition center known throughout Mexico for the "Feria de San Marcos." Times of prayer as well as bible introductions followed by times of reflection and sharing were held there. Every afternoon, participants visited the Christian communities of the city, not only to discover how people attempt to live out the Gospel in contemporary Mexico, but also to perform concrete acts of solidarity towards the most unfortunate by visiting the ill, the elderly, and street children.

Letter from Taizé

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Correspondence: Letter from Taizé,
71250 Taizé-Communauté, France
e-mail: letter@taize.fr www.taize.fr
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